

Tools of the Trade

Job Search Tools and Resources

By Connie Blaine

Performance Evaluation

Most employers periodically do a formal, written review of your work. A positive performance evaluation from your current or previous job can increase your chances of getting a job. You can include it with an application or resume.

Letters of Recommendation

It's customary for an employee leaving a job on good terms to request a letter of recommendation from the employer or supervisor. However, employers are not required to provide these and may not because of liability or company policy. The letter should focus on your job performance and duties but may touch on personal qualities, such as being a team player or your dependability.

If you're a student ready to complete your training but you have little or no work experience, you can ask your teachers, academic advisor, or a mentor to write a letter of recommendation.

If you are new to the labor market and you have no paid work experience, ask someone you've completed a task or project with or someone who knows you well to write a letter of recommendation. This could be someone you've done volunteer work for/with, a church or community leader, a neighbor or landlord. The letter should say how long they've known you, address the quality of your task performance, dedication, skills and work habits.

In addition to a good resume, cover letter, interviewing skills and networking, these tools and resources can help you land a job.

Temporary Work, Internships, Volunteer

Temporary work, such as in a retail store during the holidays, or for a temp agency, is a way to get work experience and a letter of recommendation from an employer and may even lead to a permanent job. Volunteer work or an internship—paid or unpaid—can accomplish these things as well.

Work Samples

Figure out a way to show work you've done to a prospective employer—something you've written, before and after pictures of a project you've done, video, or objects you've created that relate to the job you're applying for. For example, a clerical worker may show pamphlets or brochures she's written or designed; a painter, carpenter, chef, or hairdresser could show pictures of their work; a trainer or speaker could show a video of the presentation. Even hobbies can demonstrate relevant skills.

DWS Veteran Services

Veteran Services can help veterans prepare for and find employment. For a complete list of services and more, see 'On the Web' below.

Vocational Rehabilitation

Eligible individuals with disabilities can receive assistance to prepare for and obtain employment from their local Utah State Office of Rehabilitation. Services include vocational evaluation, assisted technology, supported employment and other employment assistance. Log onto <http://www.usor.utah.gov/>, or find them in the State Government blue phone book pages.

On the Web

<http://jobs.utah.gov/jobseeker/veterans/>
<http://www.usor.utah.gov/>